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*Rev Ed. A. T. Hunt  
with Christian regards  
of the author*

MISSIONARY INQUIRY:

A

# DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

SOCIETY FOR INQUIRY,

OF

MADISON UNIVERSITY.

1807-78

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BY JOHN DOWLING, D. D.,

Pastor of the Broadway Baptist Church, New York City.

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MADISON UNIVERSITY, Aug. 18, 1851.

Rev. John Dowling, D. D.,

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned, in behalf of the SOCIETY FOR INQUIRY of Madison University, would tender you their sincere thanks for the excellent and much admired Sermon, delivered before them at their late Anniversary, and believing that it would greatly subserve the interests of Christ's kingdom in the world, request the same in *full* for publication.

Very respectfully,

A. T. ROSE,  
WILLIAM J. PARKHURST,  
M. J. KNOWLTON.

HAMILTON, Aug. 19, 1851.

GENTLEMEN:—In compliance with the request of the SOCIETY FOR INQUIRY of Madison University, communicated through you, I hereby transmit the manuscript of my Discourse on "MISSIONARY INQUIRY," for publication under your direction.

My object in the selection and treatment of my theme, however feebly attempted, was, in your own words, "to subserve the interests of Christ's kingdom in the world," particularly by calling the attention of our rising ministry to the field to be cultivated, the encouragements to expect success, and the question of individual consecration to the work of preaching Christ to the heathen; and especially in view of the present alarming paucity of candidates for the foreign missionary field. May God bless the publication to his own glory! and may your beloved Institution continue to be in future years, as in the past, the nursing mother of multitudes of faithful and successful missionaries of Christ.

I remain, your affectionate servant for Christ's sake,

J. DOWLING.

Messrs. A. T. Rose, Wm. J. Parkhurst, and M. J. Knowlton, Committee of Society for Inquiry.

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” Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? If ye  
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## DISCOURSE.

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” Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? If ye  
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It is not altogether easy to determine the precise meaning of the brief and isolated prophecy, of which these words are a part; nor will the object for which I have chosen them, on the present occasion, require me to attempt a critical examination of the different opinions which have been expressed of their original scope and design. I shall make, therefore, only a passing allusion to that interpretation which seems most natural and obvious. The scene presented before us in the prophecy, appears to be one of dramatic character and interest. The time is the dark hours of night which precede the morning dawn. The scene, a watch-tower of Israel, and the distant mountain of Seir in Dumah or Idumea. The characters, the Prophet-watchman of Israel, and interlocutors from the dark mountain in the distance. The long, dark night is one of Israel's calamity, perhaps that of the predicted captivity in Babylon, the termination of which is so graphically pictured in the preceding verses of the chapter. The prophet is seen upon his watch-tower, anxiously peering through the gloom for some tokens of the morning dawn. While thus engaged, he hears a voice, calling to him out of Seir,—I know not whether in sympathy or in scorn,—“ Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?” To this inquiry the prophet exclaims in reply, “ The morning cometh, and also the night.” The morning (probably,) of deliverance, the morning of prosperity to captive Israel,—the night of darkness, the night of calamity to the persecutors and



# ANNALS OF THE SOCIETY OF INQUIRY

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## THE SOCIETY OF INQUIRY

oppressors of Israel, and to the enemies of Israel's God.  
“The morning cometh, and also the night, if ye will inquire, inquire ye.”

The application I shall make of the words this evening, is one suggested by the interesting occasion on which we are now assembled. And for this I shall offer no apology, as it would be easy to quote illustrious precedent for applying this passage as an inquiry relative to the moral condition of a benighted world, and to the signs of the approaching dawn of the Sun of Righteousness upon “the dark places of the earth, full of the habitations of cruelty,”—to such inquiries, as have been sounding forth from this Society for more than a quarter of a century to the watchmen upon the heights of our missionary Zion,

“Watchman! tell us of the night,  
What its signs of promise are.”

The express object of this SOCIETY OF INQUIRY, as defined in the first article of its Constitution, is “to inquire into the moral and religious condition of the world.” In the pursuit of these inquiries, they have been engaged for the twenty-six years of their history: and as answers have come back from the banks of the Ganges, the Irrawaddy, or the Salwen, telling with rapture of the grey streaks of the morning, rising over the thick darkness of Pagan night, the soul of many a youthful member of this Christian brotherhood has been stirred as by the sound of a trumpet, and he has pressed forward to offer himself as a sacrifice upon the altar of Christian missions, and coveted as his highest honor on earth, a home and a grave on heathen shores; and as his dearest reward in Heaven, “a crown of rejoicing,” composed of ransomed spirits, snatched from idolatry and heathenism by the blessing of God upon his own labors on their behalf.

If then it be the object of the inquiries pursued by this Society, to awaken this glowing missionary spirit in the hearts of its members; so that, whether occupying a post of labor at home, or abroad, they shall consecrate their



talents, their energies, and their lives to the work of the world's evangelization; if such, I say, be the noble object sought by this youthful brotherhood of the sons of the prophets, then shall our voices be heard this day on behalf of the ministers and churches of our land, bidding them God-speed; and in tones of encouragement and sympathy, addressing them in the words of the prophet, "If ye will inquire, inquire ye."

The subject of my present discourse will be one suggested by the name and the character of the Society I have the honor to address, viz., MISSIONARY INQUIRY; and my object, on this occasion, will be to suggest a few of the most prominent and important themes of inquiry which such an Association should pursue.

I. In the prosecution of any great enterprise, but little progress can be expected in the right direction, until a full and definite conception shall have been formed of the precise work to be accomplished. The first inquiry, therefore, which should be proposed by such a Society as yours, and indeed by all who would participate in the toils and the triumphs of the missionary enterprise, should be, *What is the work to be done?* What is the magnitude and extent of the field which is to be cultivated? and what is the nature of the moral transformation proposed, and expected to be achieved? It may be easy to reply to these momentous inquiries, by quoting the words of our blessed Lord, "the field is the world;" but far more difficult is it to form an adequate conception of the vastness,—I had almost said the immensity,—of meaning embodied in this answer. Yes, the world, with its fifty millions of square miles of territory, and its thousand millions of people, with its mighty Continents and countless Islands,—its Empires, and Kingdoms, and States, and Nations,—all, *all* belongs to the kingdom of our Immanuel by promise and by right; and upon the Christian husbandman it devolves to scatter the seed of the kingdom over its peopled deserts and trackless wastes, till every valley upon earth's wide surface shall be vocal with His praises, and every mountain shall echo the song.

How vast the field to be cultivated ! How broad the domain that is yet to constitute Christ's kingdom upon earth ! If a traveler were to journey on foot through the length and breadth of our single, but noble State, from the Hudson to Lake Erie, from the Atlantic to the St. Lawrence ; it might then help him to form some conception of the magnitude of that missionary field, which is the world, to be told that the territory of the State of New York, which he had traversed, includes only forty-six thousand out of the fifty millions of square miles of land on the earth's surface, or far less than one thousandth part of the whole. And it might help him further, to grasp the idea of the teeming millions who are eventually to submit to the sceptre of Immanuel, to be told that notwithstanding the population of the State, which he had traversed, is fifty-three to every square mile, while that of the entire globe is but twenty, yet that the whole State, including its five hundred thousand in the great American metropolis, and all the thronging multitudes of its numerous cities and villages, and towns, comprises but about one four hundredth part of the entire population of the globe ; that almost countless throng who are eventually to surround the triumphal car of the Redeemer, and to crown HIM Lord of all.

The population of the earth has, of late years, been variously estimated at from eight hundred to one thousand millions of people. Since the verification of the vast estimate of three hundred and sixty millions for the Chinese Empire, there can be little doubt that the largest number is the nearest to the truth. Assuming then, one thousand millions as correct, it may be estimated that about six hundred millions are idolators ; one hundred millions Mohammedans ; and the remaining three hundred millions, with the exception of six million Jews, belonging to nations bearing the Christian name, though including, of course, all the varieties of error, indifference, and infidelity, that are to be found in nominally Christian lands. Suppose that of these two hundred and ninety-



four millions of nominal Christians, we allow one hundred and seventy millions for the Romish, and fifty millions for the Greek and Armenian Churches, then we have about seventy-four millions as the Protestant population of the world. Now deduct fourteen millions as the proportion of children, and we have sixty millions as the adult population of Protestant Christendom; and is it possible, I ask, for even Christian charity itself to conclude that more than one in three, or twenty millions out of the sixty, are true and faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ? Out of one thousand millions, not more than twenty millions who are converted men and women! Forty-nine out of fifty of the world's population still in nature's darkness, and only *one* out of *fifty* the subjects of regenerating and saving grace! What disciple of Jesus, in contemplating a statement like this, can help exclaiming with Jeremiah, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

A view like this might tempt the desponding to question the ultimate triumph of Christianity, were it not for the promise and the presence of Jesus, our Almighty Captain and Saviour, who has said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The believing, trusting disciple, calls to mind the fact that eighteen centuries ago, the whole Christian church could meet in an upper chamber, and "the number of names together were about a hundred and twenty," and yet in a few days they were charged with having "filled Jerusalem with their doctrine," and in a few years, with having "turned the world upside down," "so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." He remembers how small a lapse of time sufficed, in apostolic days, to multiply the little band of disciples to fifty fold their number; and why should he hesitate to believe that a return to the measure of primitive piety and zeal, might be attended with the ratio of primitive success, and by multiplying these twenty millions of disciples to fifty fold their number, solve the



problem of the world's conversion, and change the moral wilderness into an Eden, and the desert into the garden of the Lord? And wherefore should he suppose that the Lord's arm is shortened that he can not save, or his ear heavy that he can not hear, or doubt that the zeal of the Lord of Hosts may yet perform this? If one of ancient Israel might "chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight," who shall say that with Christ as their leader, and the Holy Spirit as their sanctifier, twenty millions of disciples may not save a thousand million souls?

To nothing less than this glorious consummation does Christian hope aspire, and with nothing less than this will Christian zeal and philanthropy be content. This, then, is the answer to the missionary inquiry, *What is the work to be done?* It is, to enlighten the darkened, to instruct the ignorant, to elevate the debased, and to save the lost; it is to translate God's word into every language, to furnish a Bible to every family, to preach the gospel to every creature, and to plant the love of Jesus in a thousand million of human hearts. This work will not be done till this gospel shall cast down every idol temple, shut up every Mohammedan mosque, "utterly abolish" every idol, close every distillery, transform every weapon of war into an implement of peaceful industry, free every bondman, and break every yoke.

Then shall the final jubilee of liberty be proclaimed in every land. Then shall all, of every kindred, and color, and clime, greet each other as brothers and friends; and joining in one universal chorus, shall renew the triumphal shout of ancient Israel, on the day of her deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

"Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea,  
Jehovah hath triumphed! his people are free!"

Then, "there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain," and then, in the glowing words of the eloquent MASON, "The shout of the isles shall swell the thunder of the Continent; the Thames and the Danube, the Tiber and the Rhine, shall call upon the Euphra-

tes, the Ganges, and the Nile; and the loud concert shall be joined by the Hudson, the Mississippi, and the Amazon, singing with one heart and one voice, Hallelujah! Salvation! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!" "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ!" Then, but not till then, shall the missionary work be done.

II. Another inquiry, most deeply interesting to such an Association as this, is, *What portion of this work has been accomplished in the sixty years that have almost transpired since the commencement of the modern Missionary enterprise?*

It is within the life-time of some of the fathers before me that we are to date the epoch of modern missions. Sixty years ago, and the Protestants of America, and Europe, with scarcely an exception, appeared to sleep over the miseries and destitution of the heathen world, and to be almost entirely regardless of the standing command of Christ, to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." To quote the candid and truthful acknowledgment of an eloquent Presbyterian divine of New York city,\* "Excepting the noble beginnings of the Moravians and the Danes, there was, among Protestants, no efficient organization for the propagation of Christianity, till the eve of the present century. In this wise and glorious charity," adds the writer, "the Baptists of England were nobly in advance. It was an association of ministers and churches at Nottingham, who set apart an hour on the first Monday evening of every month for extraordinary prayer for the extension of Christ's kingdom in the world. It was in the Spring of 1792, that CAREY, preaching before the Association, gave utterance to that noble sentiment which has ever since been the watchword of the Christian Church, 'EXPECT GREAT THINGS, AND ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS.'"

Yes, my brethren, it was this watchword, uttered by our own CAREY, and sounding forth, like the shrill blast

\* Rev. William Adams, D. D., in the Christian Review for Jan. 1851.



of a clarion, that was destined to awaken the whole of sleeping Christendom from the slumber of ages. True, there were a few noble and self-sacrificing men, in the ranks of Protestantism, who long prior to this had braved hardship, and danger, and even death itself, in the holy task of carrying the gospel to those who were sitting in darkness. Where can we look for holier, more self-denying, or more successful missionaries, than those bright lights of a previous century, CHRISTIAN HENRY, or FREDERICK SWARTZ, or JOHN ELLIOTT, or DAVID BRAINARD? The attempts of these Christian heroes, and of a few others of kindred spirit, were, however, but separate and isolated efforts; they were like the heroic actions of individual warriors, attempting singly to encounter the foe; noble in daring, and holy in aim, yet inefficient and short-lived, because single and unaided. The few solitary missionary heroes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as they planted themselves amidst the thick darkness of Pagan night, were but like single and distant stars peering through the midnight clouds of a moonless night, in opposite quarters of the heavens, and serving little other purpose, except to render visible to Christendom, the gross darkness which covered the nations. Previous to the utterance of CAREY's watchword, the churches of the Reformation had attempted but small things in the way of the world's evangelization, and they had expected but small things in return. Now they are reminded that "glorious things are spoken of Zion, the city of our God;" and in the language of CAREY's text, the command and the encouragement are sounded forth in the ears of a slumbering church, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitation; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand, and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." How was that command heeded? In what degree has that promise and encouragement been realized? These are the inquiries which we must now briefly consider.



O, brethren, it was God who put words in the mouth of CAREY, that day. The set time to favor Zion had come. The Sun of Righteousness was about to arise and shine upon the nations with healing in his wings. God himself was arousing a slumbering Church, and he selected such an agent to sound the blast, as to show that the glory is all his own. CAREY was never mighty as a preacher, yet on this occasion the effect of his sermon upon his auditors was overwhelming. In describing it, says Dr. Ryland,\* "If all the people had lifted up their voice and wept, as the children of Israel did at Bochim, I should not have wondered at the effect; it would only have seemed proportionate to the cause; so clearly did he prove the criminality of our supineness in the cause of God."

The summons to Zion had gone forth to enlarge the place of her tent, and at once that summons was heeded. A resolution was passed instantler, that "a plan should be prepared by the next meeting at Kettering, for the purpose of forming a Society for propagating the gospel among the heathen." That next meeting came. The plan was presented and adopted, and the first subscription was made on the spot, amounting to £13 2s. 6d sterling, or \$63,52. Think of it, brethren! A Society formed *for the conversion of a world*, resolved to expect great things and attempt great things, and \$63,52 subscribed to begin the work! And yet was this offering from the poverty of the hopeful little band, a noble one, and not unaccepted of Him who smiled approval upon the widow's two mites which make a farthing? There were multitudes of the proud and the scornful of that day, however, who like Sanballat, the ancient enemy of God's Israel, were ready to point the finger of scorn at the little band at Kettering, and to say, "What do these feeble Jews? Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." What! said the great and the wise of this world, "Are these the men to attempt the conversion of a world? and is £13 2s. 6d, the vast amount to be expended on this

\* See Ryland's life of Andrew Fuller.

enterprise?" But wait, O scornful men! wait but a few years, and ye shall learn not to despise the day of small things. "Who art thou, O great mountain! before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." And now, three-score years have not quite passed away, and we point to India, to Burmah, to China, to the Islands of the Sea, to a translated Bible in the languages of hundreds of millions of the heathen, and we list to the songs of Zion as they are borne on the breeze from the lips of three hundred thousand converted heathen, and we say, "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

Three years after the English Baptist Missionary Society, that is in the year 1795, the London Missionary Society was formed, under the auspices of the late venerable BOGUE, BURDER, and their noble coadjutors; and this was followed by another, and another, first in Great Britain, then in America, and afterwards in France, and other parts of continental Europe, till at length the glorious spectacle is presented of the different evangelical denominations in both Hemispheres, running side by side in this glorious race of Christian benevolence, while the sum of nearly three millions of dollars annually, is freely contributed by the friends of Christ, and expended by the different Protestant Missionary Societies of Christendom in the work of evangelizing the world. O, my brethren! what a contrast between the little company at Kettering in 1792, commencing this glorious modern missionary work with their \$63,52, and the recent total missionary statistics of a single year. These were, for the last year, for all the great Protestant brotherhood of Societies, 2,033 foreign missionaries, 4,208 assistants, 1,280 missionary stations, 247,867 living converts actually reported, making with a very moderate estimate for the Societies, whose communicants are not reported, at least 300,000 living converts from heathenism, and the total receipts for the year \$2,959,541.



In estimating the total of converts from heathenism for the past sixty years, we are not to suppose that the number of *living* converts includes the whole. Multitudes of such, like Krishno Pal, or Abdool Messeh, Henry Obookiah, Africaner, or Ko Thah-byu, have already died in the triumphs of Christian faith, and have gone home to mingle their songs with those of the redeemed in glory, not less according to the opinion of those best qualified to judge than two hundred thousand; thus making a total of five hundred thousand converted heathen, either already in Heaven, or on the way thither, as the result of the modern missionary enterprise, commenced sixty years ago. O, brethren! it is a privilege to live in a day like this, and to share in triumphs so glorious as these!

Yes! two hundred thousand of these converts from heathenism have gone to cast their crowns at the feet of the Redeemer, and to join the society, not only of MARTYN and CAREY, of MORRISON and WILLIAMS, of BOARDMAN and JUDSON, and others whose privilege it was to aid in gathering in this missionary harvest: but the society of OWEN and FLAVEL, of BAXTER and BUNYAN, of RUTHERFORD and LEIGHTON, and other holy men, who were taken home to their rest long before the Christian Church had awakened to the miseries and the wants of a dying world. Four centuries ago, when that blessed martyr, JOHN HUSS, was suffering the persecutions of an apostate Church, a prophetic view of the glories of a coming age seemed to be presented to his spirit, and while joy lit up his countenance, he spoke of that brighter day which he believed would dawn upon the world, when a pure gospel should be preached, and the kingdom of Christ should be extended in the world. "And I," said the man of God, "awakening from the dead and rising, as it were, from my grave, shall leap for joy!" And O, if there be interchange of thought, in Heaven, between the glorified spirits of the sainted dead, then what a thrill of new-born rapture must entrance the souls of those holy men who "died without the sight" of the glories of a missionary age, as they are joined by the Apostles of this glorious enter-



prise ascending up from Tahiti or Africa, from India or Burmah, from Arracan or China; and as they welcome to those seats of bliss the hundreds and thousands of converted heathen who follow in their train, trophies of their toils and their triumphs.

But we are not to suppose that the results of this modern missionary enterprise are all told, when we have estimated the number of converts from heathenism. Is it nothing that the spirit of Christian missions has removed the most inveterate prejudices, broken the chain of caste, abolished the horrid Suttee, almost stopped the cruel practice of infanticide in India, and turned whole nations of licentious and hateful cannibals in New Zealand and the South Sea Islands, into peaceful and civilized communities? Is it nothing that a language and a Christian literature have been formed for many nations, previously destitute, like the Karens of a written language? Is it nothing that after these languages have been constructed by the Christian missionary, the whole of God's precious word has been translated and printed therein? Ought it not to be reckoned, as one most glorious result of this missionary enterprise, that more than ten times as many Bibles have been printed and put in circulation within the last fifty years, as had ever existed in the world previous to that time? Nor let it be supposed we are here speaking at a peradventure. It has been ascertained by the most accurate data, that previous to the present century, all the editions of God's word ever printed, amounted to an aggregate of less than four million copies, in about forty different languages. Since the epoch of modern missions, that same blessed volume has been translated for the ~~three~~ hundred and sixty millions of China, for the one hundred millions of Hindostan, for the twenty or thirty millions of Burmah, and has been printed in not less than one hundred and sixty different languages and dialects, into one hundred and twenty of which languages the Bible had never before been translated. The entire number of copies of the Scriptures issued by sixty-three Bible Societies, all of which have sprung into existence

within the last fifty years, exclusive of the millions of copies that have been printed by private publishers, amounts, as shown by their recent reports, to the enormous aggregate of forty million, four hundred and fourteen thousand, eight hundred and seventy-nine. Of these sixty three Bible Societies, six are in India; the Calcutta, the North India, the Madras, the Bombay, the Colombo, and the Jaffna Bible Societies; the other fifty-seven are in America and Europe. It is an interesting fact that the six Societies in India,—that land, till so lately, enveloped in Pagan darkness,—have alone issued over sixteen hundred thousand copies of the sacred Scriptures. Of the remainder, the British and Foreign Bible Society, instituted in 1804, has issued twenty-three million, one hundred and ten thousand, and fifty copies; the American Bible Society, instituted in 1816, six million, nine hundred and eighty thousand, five hundred and thirty-five copies; and the American and Foreign Bible Society, instituted in 1837, seven hundred and ninety-four thousand, three hundred and ninety-eight copies. And thus has a broad and massive foundation been laid for the operations of future missionaries, with these forty million Bibles, aided by the almost countless publications of the Sunday-School, Tract and Publication Societies, in the old world and new. Such are some of the results of the past sixty years' labor:—five hundred thousand converts from heathenism; over two thousand missionaries and four thousand assistants at present laboring in the field; one hundred and twenty new translations of the Scriptures, into languages spoken by five hundred millions of heathen; and upwards of forty million copies of the word of God sent forth to enlighten and to bless the world. Such are some of the great things which CAREY bade us attempt, and such are some of the great things which, in the name of his Master, he encouraged us to expect.

III. Another inquiry, which we might profitably pursue at length, but at which time will forbid more than a glance, is, *Will a continuance of the past amount of*



*labor, and the past ratio of success, result in the conversion of the world to Christ?*

We have looked on the bright side of the picture, but there is a dark side also. We have told of half a million of converts, and our hearts have thrilled with rapture, as we have dwelt upon the delightful thought of five hundred thousands of heathen snatched from the darkness and horrors of idolatry, and raised to the dignity of Christians, and to the bliss of Heaven. But still, we can not forget, that this is but one two-thousandth part of the population of the world, and that if the Pagans have been rightly estimated at six hundred millions, then, even upon the improbable supposition that there has been no increase in that portion of the world's population in the last sixty years, still there are five hundred and ninety-nine and a half millions remaining in heathen darkness. The probability is, however, that the natural increase of the population of Pagan lands has more than counterbalanced the desertion from their ranks to Christianity. And, if this is true, then the painful fact must be admitted, that there are probably more Pagans in the world now than there were sixty years ago, when these modern missionary efforts were commenced; although the pain we can not but feel at a statement like this, is partly alleviated by the fact that there are, doubtless also, more Christians in the world now than ever before. If these things are true, then we are forced to the conclusion, that a greatly increased number of laborers must be sent forth, and a largely increased ratio of success must be realized, before the world can be converted to Christ.

It is to be remembered, however, on the other hand, that a large portion of the missionary labor hitherto expended, has been preparatory; the laying of the foundations upon which future missionaries may build; the construction of written languages, the preparation of Lexicons and Grammars, the translation of the Scriptures, and the writing and printing of school books and tracts; labors these, which can hardly be expected to produce at once, a reve-



nue of souls, but which will wonderfully facilitate the labor of future missionaries, and leave them far more at liberty than have been the pioneers in this enterprise, to engage in their most appropriate work of preaching Christ to the heathen.

There is another consideration, which may serve to relieve the darkness of this picture, and to inspire hope for the future. Hitherto the work of preaching to the heathen has been done mostly by missionaries from Christian lands; but when the gospel has once taken root in a heathen land, we are to remember that the converts are themselves to become missionaries, and the work of preaching the gospel to their benighted countrymen is to be performed chiefly by native preachers; and thus the glorious work is to go on, with results increasing in geometrical progression, till the world shall be converted to Christ.

In estimating numerical results, the difference is almost inconceivable, as every mathematician knows, between arithmetical and geometrical progression. According to the former, it may be argued, that if half a century is required to convert half a million heathen, then it would require six hundred centuries, or ten times as long as the world has stood, to convert the six hundred millions of Pagans. But according to the latter and the true mode of calculation, if the work is to advance in geometrical progression, and each successive battalion of Christian converts from heathenism, is to become a recruiting army, doubling their number by fresh invasions upon the ranks of Paganism, then it is impossible to say how soon the shout of triumph may be heard throughout a regenerated world, "Hallelujah! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." With a ratio of success in every land, equal to that which attended the labors of a few Karen preachers, when over two thousand converts were baptized in a single year by Mr. Abbott, how brief a period would be required to convert the world!

Speaking of one of these preachers, the apostolic Kothah-byu, says Mr. MASON, "A dozen such men, would, with the blessing of God, renovate the nation." Under the faithful labors of this modern Saul of Tarsus, and other native Karen preachers, "whole villages turned to God;" and the rapidly increasing number of native preachers, in connection with these missions, encourages us to believe that the next fifty years will develop results from God's blessing on this agency, compared with which all the successes of the past shall be but as a drop in the bucket. And who shall say, I ask, that ere another half century shall have passed away, Burmah and Arracan may not only have a ministry of their own, but send out an army of missionaries to preach the gospel in the regions beyond them? And if Burmah and Arracan, then why not other lands, when missionaries shall have carried them the gospel, and God shall have raised up a native ministry, till the world is converted to Christ? While these considerations, however, may inspire us with hope for the future, it is evident that before we can expect results like these, or hope for the conversion of a world, the number of missionaries must be largely increased, the Churches of Christ must attain a higher standard of missionary zeal and of moral power at home, and as a consequence of this "elevation of the moral power of the church," the ratio of success attending the labors of her missionaries in heathen lands, must be largely increased.

IV. Another inquiry must secure a few moments attention. *What then is the encouragement to expect ultimate success?*

"If any ask," said the apostolic JUDSON, thirty-five years ago, and before a single convert had rewarded his fidelity, "If any ask, what prospect of ultimate success is there? tell them, *as much as that there is an Almighty and faithful God, who will perform his promises, and no more.* If this does not satisfy them, beg them to let me stay and make the attempt, and let you\* come and

\* Rev. Luther Rice, to whom he was writing.



give us bread ; or if they are unwilling to risk their bread on such a forlorn hope, as has nothing but the word of God to sustain it, beg of them, at least, not to prevent others from giving us bread. And if we live some twenty or thirty years they may hear from us again." Sixteen years afterwards, when God had rewarded his trust by a harvest of souls, the same faithful man, accompanied by several converted native assistants, was sailing down the Salwen, on a missionary tour to the natives on its banks. On their way, they were hailed by a boat full of men ; the chief of the party proved to be a humble believer in Jesus, and his petition was soon preferred to Dr. JUDSON, whom he had long desired to see, that he might be buried with Christ in baptism. After the reception of the solemn rite, the happy convert, like the Eunuch of old, "went on his way rejoicing aloud, and declaring his resolution to make known the eternal God, and the dying love of Jesus on all the banks of the Yoon-za-len, his native stream." After relating this affecting and pleasing incident, we hear the same faithful missionary exclaiming with sacred joy and triumph, "The dying words of an aged man of God, when he waved his withered death-struck arm, and exclaimed, '*The best of all is, God is with us,*' I feel in my very soul. Yes, the great Invisible is in these Karen wilds ! That mighty Being who heaped up these craggy rocks, and reared these stupendous mountains, and poured out these streams in all directions, and scattered immortal beings throughout these deserts—He is present by the influence of his Holy Spirit, and accompanies the sound of the gospel with converting, sanctifying power. THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US !"

O yes, my brethren ! this is the great encouragement to expect success in this glorious work. We might speak of the early triumphs of Christianity, and the encouraging signs of the times, as well adapted to fire our ardor and to animate our hope ; but after all, it is the presence and the promise of Jehovah, that can alone inspire us with the confidence of assured and ultimate triumph.

With two thousand holy men already in the field, from the different battalions of Zion's army, if they are only animated with such an unfaltering trust as JUDSON's in the promises of a faithful God, and with the promise of the Spirit as the pledge of success, what results are too great, too glorious to anticipate? And why should not a host of Zion's youthful sons be ready to follow in their pathway as they beckon them onward to victory? And why should not the whole Church of God press forward to a glorious and certain triumph? Yes, "The best of all is, God is with us!" And *that* God has said, "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one." "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." O, brethren! it was encouragement enough for JUDSON, and shall it not be encouragement enough for us? "There is as much prospect of ultimate success, as that there is an Almighty and faithful God who will perform his promises, and no more."

Let us join then in the sublime aspiration of JOHN MILTON, "Come, therefore, O thou that hast the seven stars in thy right hand, appoint thy chosen priests according to their order and courses of old to minister before thee, and duly to dress and pour out the consecrated oil into thy holy and ever burning lamps. Thou hast sent out the spirit of prayer upon thy servants over all the earth to this effect, and stirred up their vows as the sound of many waters about the throne. The times and seasons pass along at thy feet, to go and come at thy bidding. Come forth, then, out of thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth! Put on the visible robes of thy Imperial Majesty; take up that unlimited sceptre which the Almighty Father hath bequeathed thee, for now the voice of thy Bride calls thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed!"



V. I must yet implore your patience, members of the SOCIETY FOR INQUIRY, while I call your attention to another most solemn and momentous inquiry, which every member of this and of all similar Associations should propose individually to himself, *Is it my personal duty to become a missionary to the heathen?*

The special object of all the investigations of such a SOCIETY FOR INQUIRY as this, should be to decide the question of individual duty to the heathen world, and the prayer which each member should present before the Mercy Seat, as from these heights of Zion he looks over the missionary field, should be in singleness of heart, and with sincere desire to know the will of God,—“Lord what wilt thou have *me* to do?” And one primary object of all the other inquiries, which, as members of this Association, you pursue, should be, to assist in the settlement of this. It is with pleasure, therefore, that I have learned from your last Annual Report, that among other important subjects which have engaged your attention, “the criteria by which to decide the question of personal duty to the heathen,” has been attentively considered, and has drawn forth a full and elaborate report. The importance of this inquiry is enhanced at the present juncture of our missionary operations, not only from the present, but prospective paucity of new recruits for the missionary ranks, as proved by a careful examination of the statistics of our Colleges and Theological Institutions at home. We have been startled by the announcement that in all our five northern Theological Institutions, there are but sixty-six College graduates, (from which class missionaries must generally be selected,) and of these, that only sixteen will complete their Theological course during the year 1851; and that while eleven new missionary laborers are at this moment needed by our Board, only a single one out of these sixteen has been found the present year, to offer himself to the glorious work of preaching among the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ.

O, that I could make my voice heard by every student

for the Christian ministry in the land, as I plead with you beloved young brethren, to take into most solemn and earnest consideration this inquiry, “Is it *my* duty to become a missionary to the heathen?” Remember that the proper time to settle this question is just as soon as you have become convinced of the duty of preaching the gospel, and while you are as yet unincumbered by the cares and anxieties of the family relation. How many a faithful man of God might be found among the pastors of our Churches, ready at once to respond to the affecting appeals for additional laborers, were it not for the perplexity of a matrimonial alliance, formed with no reference to the missionary field, or of a family of beloved children whom he can not take with him to grow up amidst the pollutions of a heathen land, and whom the tender yearnings of a father’s heart will not permit him to leave behind! O, I am sure there are many such, patiently toiling among the Churches of our land, and yet, like the heavenly-minded SAMUEL PEARCE, pining in secret for a field of labor on heathen shores; and were it not for this one single consideration, a host of these men of God would at once rush forward with the cry, “Here am I, send me.” With many of them, it was doubtless, in early life, a subject of inquiry and prayer. But the precious season of early manhood passed by. These tender ties grew around them ere the question of duty was decided; and now all that is left them is to pray and to labor, at home, for that cause, to which once they longed to consecrate their lives.

Admonished by these examples, which I am satisfied are by no means rare, I would say to every young man throughout the land who is contemplating the Christian ministry,—Ask yourself, first, my brother, what is your duty to the heathen. Remember that the commission of Christ is bounded by no geographical limits; it embraces the whole world, and enjoins the preaching of the gospel to every creature. And while the missionary fields, in every direction, are whitening for the harvest, and the laborers, as compared with the supply in our own land, are



so few, it would seem that the rising ministry should take it for granted that in obeying this commission, it is their duty to go to the heathen, unless there are special reasons for staying at home; and not, as is too generally inferred, that duty calls them to tarry at home, unless there are special and peculiar reasons for going to the heathen.—Excuse me then, beloved young brethren, if I again say, make this a matter of early, solemn, and prayerful inquiry. Make no prospective matrimonial alliance, till this question is settled, decide it in the fear of God; and once decided that duty calls you to the heathen, then let all the future plans and arrangements of life have reference to the one question—“Will it increase my usefulness as a missionary of Christ?” May God help you, brethren, to decide this momentous question of duty, and to decide it aright!

We have been told, and we have all felt pained at the announcement, that there is but a single recruit for the missionary ranks the present year from the graduates of all our Institutions; yet it can not be other than gratifying to you, my brethren, that that single volunteer is one who has long been an active member of your SOCIETY FOR INQUIRY;\* the *forty-third* of the devoted band who have gone forth, from your number to plant the standard of the cross on heathen shores. How delightful and animating the thought that from this consecrated spot more than forty youthful heralds of salvation have gone forth to heathen lands, with hearts glowing with love to Christ, not counting their lives dear unto them so they might finish the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God!

O, there are associations, touching and delightful asso-

\* The beloved brother here alluded to, is the Rev. WILLIAM T. BIDDLE, late a tutor in Madison University. He was born June 8th, 1824; ordained to the work of the Christian ministry, August 13th, 1851; married August 14th; graduated from the Theological Department of Madison University, August 20th; designated at Hamilton as a Missionary to the Pwo Karens, August 21st; and while this discourse was going through the press, departed this life at the residence of the author, in New York, on Wednesday, September 21st, 1851. “How unsearchable are HIS judgments and his ways past finding out.”—“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

ciations clustering around this sacred hill, eminently adapted to foster the spirit of missionary devotion, and which may well endear to the friends of missions, every tree which waves its foliage around it, every foot of its soil, every atom of its dust. How many vows of consecration have been breathed, how many prayers for direction have been uttered, how many tears of devotion have been shed in the sequestered walks and shady groves which encompass this now venerable school of the prophets by these forty-three missionaries of Christ. And how often from the far distant shores of Burmah or Siam, of Arracan or Assam, has the heart of the voluntary Christian exile, wandered back to these hallowed scenes, where his first missionary vows were breathed, till his moistened eyes have seemed almost to gaze once more upon the well remembered spot, and to recognize again that chosen bower of prayer that was once, to him, so dear; and as the image of his loved *Alma Mater* has loomed up vividly before his mind, he has exclaimed,

“Where’er I roam, whatever lands I see,  
My heart, untraveled, fondly turns to thee.”

Whatever may be the future destiny of this cherished Institution—and most cordially do we hope that the future may be even brighter than the past—yet whatever its destiny, it has already achieved a name which must live in history, a name which will outlive the history of Empires and Nations, a name which can not die! A time will come when pyramids shall totter and mountains shall crumble; the names of earth’s mightiest heroes shall be forgotten, and their battle-fields be remembered no more; yet, when the fields of Marathon, Arbela, or Waterloo, and the names of those who won them shall be forgotten in the wreck of a world—even then shall the name of this cherished hill be found written in the memories and hearts of the scores of missionary heroes whom it shall have nursed in its bosom, and of the thousands, and tens of thousands of converts from heathenism, who will join their glorified voices with those of their missionary fath-



ers in Christ, in praise to God that ever such an Institution as that of Hamilton existed!

Thirteen years ago, it was my privilege to occupy this stand on an occasion similar to the present. At that time, the members of this SOCIETY FOR INQUIRY were mourning the recent loss of one of the most beloved of their number, who by a painful and mysterious providence, had found an untimely grave, on the banks of the Brahmaputra, just as he had completed his perilous and protracted voyage over half the circumference of the globe, and just as his eyes were first resting upon the spot where he had expected, for many a long year, to labor for the perishing heathen. This lamented young servant of Christ was the pious, the devoted, the amiable JACOB THOMAS. A few months previously, I had sat by his side in the pulpit of the Oliver Street Church, and listened with the deepest emotion to his farewell address. In that address, Brother THOMAS had made a most touching allusion to the cherished scenes, in the midst of which, we are now assembled,—an allusion which brought tears into almost every eye in that crowded and deeply affected audience. “Brethren,” said this heavenly-minded young man, “I am going to the far-distant shores of Asia, to labor for the salvation of the heathen. Long have I desired to see this day, and now my highest wishes are realized, and I shall soon enter upon that loved employ to which I have been so long looking forward. Yet think not that I am indifferent to the charms of home, and of country, and friends. Far from it! From the opposite side of the globe, my thoughts will often revert to my own loved America; I shall think of its peaceful Sabbaths, of its blessed privileges, of the assemblies of the saints whose prayers, I know will follow me to my distant home; I shall think of you, my Christian friends, of this assembly loading me with its parting blessings; but dearer than all I leave behind,”—and here the starting tears almost choked his utterance—“I shall think of that blessed Institution where I have spent some of the happiest years of my life—of my fellow students—

of the men of God whose instructions I have shared—and of the beaten path in the neighboring grove, where I have often held communion with my Saviour—‘that blessed retreat where I’ve chosen to pray.’”

Upon my own arrival at Hamilton, to participate in the annual festivities of 1838—with this touching farewell fresh in my memory—almost my first inquiry was for JACOB THOMAS’ “bower of prayer.” The brother of whom I made the inquiry, and who soon led me to the hallowed spot, was one to whom I had for several years sustained the relation of pastor, and who had long before, in the confidence of pastoral intercourse, breathed into my own ear, the yearnings of his heart for a missionary’s life. It seems but yesterday, since the meek and humble CYRUS BARKER led me to the retired spot in yonder grove where a JACOB THOMAS had so often knelt, and wept, and prayed; and yet BARKER after having, since that time, accomplished almost his dozen years of patient and faithful labor hard by the grave of THOMAS, has just now gone home to receive the plaudit, “Well done good and faithful servant.” They both went forth in the spirit of the missionary motto “ready for either” one, to die at the altar, the other, to labor at the plough. The precious dust of THOMAS has long slumbered by the banks of the Brahmaputra, while the beloved BARKER, has at length, like the apostolic JUDSON, laid himself down to rest amidst the coral caves of the ocean, to await the hour when the sea shall give up its dead; but their glorified spirits have already met in Heaven, to share in a common reward, and to join in one song of triumph and of praise. The venerated KENDRICK also, whose remains slumber in your midst, and whose counsels they so long shared, has gone to meet them too. Yes, the father, the counselor, the guide, has joined that circle of missionary sons in the gospel, who had gone before him, and has already mingled his notes of rapture with those of SKINNER, and REED, and THOMAS, and SLAFTER, and BULLARD, and COMSTOCK, and BARKER;—and, if it were permitted to that man of God, once more to



visit these scenes of annual festivity, and once again to utter his voice in the hearing of this assembly, would he not say to you brethren, as he pointed upward to that blessed circle of glorified missionary heroes, once members of this Christian brotherhood, “Be *ye* followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises!” O brethren! will you listen to that charge?

Hark! there is a cry of weariness and suffering! It is borne on the eastern breeze from toiling missionary men; and it says in tones of anguish—“Brethren, come over and help us! We are fainting under our burdens, and the heathen around us are perishing for lack of knowledge. We dread not the repose of the grave. To depart and to be with Christ would be far better. But then, who shall feed these sheep in the wilderness? Who shall gather in these whitening harvests of souls? O brethren, we adjure you, by our failing energies, by our wasting frames, by the tombs of a BOARDMAN, a THOMAS, a COMSTOCK, by the ocean graves of a BARKER, and a JUDSON, by your pity for the heathen, by your love to Jesus—we adjure you, come over and help us.”

Hark! there is another cry! it is the wail of the heathen in his sadness, “Christians of America, our teachers are dying around us. O, send us Jesus Christ’s men to point us the way to Heaven! Beloved young ministers of Jesus, turn not away from our entreaties! Care ye not that we perish?”

Hark! there is yet another voice! it is a whisper from the spirit-land, and it comes from Hamilton’s missionary band who have reached their heavenly home. Once they were members of your Society, and loved to linger around these scenes; and, even now, I seem to see their spirits hovering over this assembly; and they whisper, “O brethren! it is sweet to labor for Jesus. Blessed be God, that we were permitted to toil for the salvation of the heathen, and to mingle our songs with theirs before the heavenly throne. Haste, brethren, haste to rescue the perish-

ing, and great, even as ours, shall be your reward in Heaven!"

Hark! there is still another voice! it falls from lips which spake as never man spake; it is the voice, O young minister, of Christ—it is the voice of thy dying Lord—but I will not interpret its utterances. Fain would I hope that the commands of Jesus are even now awakening a response in the inmost soul of more than one youthful herald of the cross, and that, at this sacred moment, he is thus breathing his solemn vow of consecration to the missionary work.

“ My soul is not at rest. There comes a strange  
And secret whisper to my spirit, like  
A dream of night, that tells me I am on  
Enchanted ground. Why live I here? The vows  
Of God are on me, and I may not stop  
To play with shadows, or pluck earthly flowers,  
Till I my work have done, and rendered up  
Account. The voice of my departed Lord,  
'Go teach all nations,' from the Eastern world  
Comes on the night air, and awakes my ear,  
AND I WILL GO.”

O, that this vow may be uttered here by more than one to-night, may be registered in Heaven, and issue in a harvest of souls, gathered from heathen lands, to shine for ever, as gems in the crown of our glorious Immanuel!





